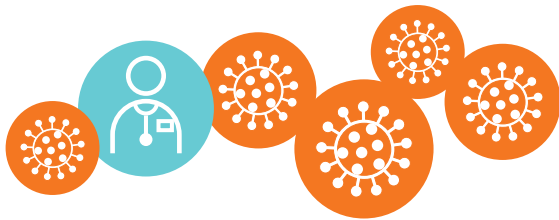


PPE, Workforce, Testing Supply Challenges Persist as Hospitals Prepare for COVID-19 Surge



Securing sufficient staff, as well as supplies of personal protective equipment and testing materials, remains challenging, as patient surges quickly sap stockpiles, demand swells nationwide, and manufacturers still have hospitals on “allocation” – rationing their requests.

Staffing during the current COVID-19 surge is challenging due to:



- Increased rates of burnout and fatigue
- Increased rates of employee illness
- Family care obligations due to school closures and illness
- Longstanding workforce shortages in critical areas like laboratory and imaging services

Challenges with supplies are broadly reported

PPE Shortage Could Last Years Without Strategic Plan, Experts Warn

– Kaiser Health News (Aug. 2020)

Covid-19 Testing Is Hampered by Shortages of Critical Ingredient

– The Wall Street Journal (Sept. 2020)

Gloves in Demand for Hospitals Facing Shortages Due to COVID-19: Premier

– Fierce Healthcare (Oct. 2020)

Months into pandemic, PPE shortage persists

– Atlanta Journal Constitution (Oct. 2020)

A Rush On Coronavirus Testing Strains Laboratories, Drives Supply Shortages

– NPR (Nov. 2020)



California Hospitals' Testing Supply Issues

These stories from the front lines illustrate the obstacles hospitals are now experiencing in trying to obtain adequate testing supplies.



Our clinical laboratories have had difficulty acquiring enough specimen collection supplies, like swabs. Because of the national allocation strategy and weekly allotment limits, we haven't had enough test reagents, and manufacturers haven't been able to meet demand for test platforms.

The pandemic has also affected hospital labs in unexpected ways due to increased testing frequency requirements for settings such as skilled-nursing facilities, and national/global shortages of common supplies, specialized containers, and more. And, we've had to unnecessarily use valuable personal protective equipment for "persons under investigation" who weren't ultimately COVID-positive because of delayed test results."

– Alameda Health System



With COVID-19 surging in our county, and a new therapeutic treatment that requires early virus identification to be effective, testing is more important than ever for our community. Even though our lab has tried everything in its power to increase testing, supplies and reagents are limited – and at times nearly impossible to secure. Swabs and transport media are increasingly difficult to find and buy. And we continue to have challenges with our vendors in getting the supplies and equipment we need, including shortages due to limited allocations, no capacity for reagents, and lack of clarity between the vendors and state/federal governments."

– El Centro Regional Medical Center



They're putting additional strain on what's still a fragile hospital supply chain. We want available product to go to front-line health care workers and not go into a warehouse right now."

– Soumi Saha, vice president of advocacy for Premier Inc. (Kaiser Health News)